



OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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RICK AUERBACH
ASSESSOR

December 23, 2003

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Rick Auerbach

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rick Auerbach", is written over the printed name.

Subject: TREASURER AND TAX COLLECTOR (TTC) REPRESENTATIVE
IN ASSESSOR'S DISTRICT OFFICES

On November 25, 2003, your Board requested a report from this office and the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC), with a plan to place a TTC representative in each of our district offices to collect tax payments during the months when property tax bills are due.

Our Lancaster regional office was used as a pilot project in each of the last two years with two TTC staff assigned from December 1st through the 10th and, again, April 1st through the 10th. No cash was collected, and the public counter was shared with Assessor public service staff. Payments were accepted this year for 1,558 bills compared to 1,082 bills last December, and 992 payments last April. However, TTC staff was moved into the small lobby area this year because their newer equipment, combined with our existing equipment, took up all of the available counter space. Adjustments were made to secure cables and extension cords with tape to the floor, and seating for the waiting public was reduced.

While having TTC staff in Assessor's offices during the December and April main collection periods certainly provides enhanced service to the public, it is important to note that hundreds of thousands of supplemental and unsecured bills are mailed and collected outside those periods. I agree with the Treasurer and Tax Collector that year-round staffing would be the best method of providing one-stop service and would eliminate confusion that would be caused by having only certain bills payable at Assessor's District offices.

Our South District office in Signal Hill was built to accommodate Treasurer and Tax Collector staff with two workstations and a separate office. However, the public counter would require modification for a secured cashiering window. The North (Sylmar), West (Culver City) and East (South El Monte) District offices would require remodeling to build the secured cashiering window and work cubicles/offices for staff. We estimate the cost at \$70,000 per district for construction.

An added concern of Assessor staff would be the perception to the public that large sums of cash would be collected. Adequate security in terms of a full-time security guard is recommended.

While the arrangement in Lancaster was successful on a temporary basis, it would be beneficial to have a more permanent arrangement to address staffing and equipment needs for both TTC and Assessor staff.

RA:f

c: David Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer
Mark Saladino
Treasurer and Tax Collector